

LIGHTNING SAFETY RULES

Stay alert to changing weather conditions in the spring and summer. It does not have to be raining for lightning to be a threat. Many people are struck by lightning before the rain begins.

Sound travels one mile every 5 seconds. When you see lightning, count the seconds until you hear thunder. If 5 seconds elapse, the thunderstorm is one mile away. 10 seconds equals two miles.

What is the “safe” distance from lightning? There is no absolute rule, but consider taking prompt, protective action if lightning is heading towards you. Be aware that lightning can strike the ground 25 or more miles away from thunderstorm!

The 30 / 30 RULE

If counting for thunderstorm distance, if it is more than 30 seconds away, you may be safe. If it is 30 seconds or less, seek shelter immediately, and then wait 30 minutes after the last thunder before returning to regular outdoor activities.

If you are outside, avoid being the tallest object, and stay away from other tall objects such as isolated trees. Get off farm equipment, golf carts or other open vehicles. A hard top car with windows shut is a relatively safe refuge. Get away from metal fences at baseball fields. Metal is a very good electrical conductor.

If you are at an outdoor sporting event or other activity, your car is the safest shelter, unless you can get to a sturdy building. Outdoor picnic shelters and dugouts are not safe locations to seek shelter in. Lightning may be ready to strike you if you feel your skin tingle, or feel your hair start to rise. Crouch down or drop to your knees, but do not lie flat on the ground.

The safest place in a thunderstorm is inside a sturdy structure (your home or store etc.). Get inside the building, but do not stand by windows, doors or patios during a thunderstorm. Unplug unnecessary appliances well before the storm arrives and don't use the telephone or take a shower until the storm has passed.

(Thursday, April 20 PSA)